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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 61st MEETING
(SECOND PART)*

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 8 March 1993, at 7 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. BROTODININGRAT (Indonesia)

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(a) Status of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

(b) Report of the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children

* The summary record of the first part of the meeting appears as document E/CN.4/1993/SR.61.

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RIGHTS OF THE CHILD, INCLUDING:

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(agenda item 24) (continued) (E/CN.4/1993/65-66, 67 and Add.1, 86, 95 and 99; E/CN.4/1993/NGO/1; E/CN.4/1992/55 and Add.1; E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/34 and Corr.1; A/RES/47/112; CRC/C/10)

THE ROLE OF YOUTH IN THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION TO MILITARY SERVICE (agenda item 26) (continued) (E/CN.4/1993/68 and Add.1-3)

1. Mr. HOVEY (Pax Christi International) said that no society could claim to be committed to the promotion of human rights if it ignored the plight of its children. At the international level, while his organization welcomed the General Assembly's adoption by consensus of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a giant step towards the full realization of those rights, it regretted the fact that article 38 of the Convention authorized the participation of children over the age of 15 in hostilities.

2. Pax Christi International also wished to draw the attention of the Commission to General Assembly resolution 47/126 of 18 December 1992 on the plight of street children, which had also been adopted by consensus. Street children were subjected to all manner of threats to their human dignity and even to their lives, with reports of children being forced into prostitution in Thailand and the United States of America or sold into servitude to pay off debts in India and Pakistan, of street children murdered in Brazil, and of the violence to which children living in the former Yugoslavia were subjected.

3. His organization commended the General Assembly for acknowledging the seriousness of the issue and for calling on Governments, United Nations organs and agencies and non-governmental organizations to take the necessary steps to relieve the suffering of those children. It urged those States which had not yet done so to become parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and called on the Commission to appoint a special rapporteur to investigate reports of violations of the rights of the child and to make recommendations aimed at improving the protection of those rights.

4. Mr. EMERY (International Association of Democratic Lawyers) said it was regrettable that Mr. Muntarbhorn's report on the sale of children (E/CN.4/1993/67) did not really break any new ground with regard to the illicit trade in children's organs and ways of putting an end to that odious practice. Yet in Argentina, following the scandal of the Montes de Oca psychiatric institution, the Minister of Public Health and Social Action had acknowledged the existence of a traffic in children and organs. In Peru,

Patrick Gagel, a lawyer accused of having organized a traffic in children's organs, had been released on bail. In Colombia, bodies of children had been found with the eyes or kidneys removed, and the inquiry into the scandal at the Baranquilla Faculty of Medicine had been reopened.

5. At the international conference on law and medical ethics held in Toronto in July 1992, Dr. J. Martin had stated that a trade in organs existed in the United States of America, and also in the United Kingdom, and that it was clear that most of those organs came from third-world countries. Organs, including children's organs, were removed totally illegally, particularly in Latin America. Dr. Martin had added that if the principle of marketing organs was accepted in circumstances that were allegedly controlled, far from ceasing, the forcible removal of organs would increase, since it was easy to provide false documentation.

6. In his view, if persons trafficking in organs who abducted children for that purpose, sometimes murdering them in the process, enjoyed impunity, it was because they were protected, like drug traffickers, and because the will to investigate that dreadful state of affairs in depth was lacking. Urgent action was thus required. Some 20 years previously, when the International Association of Democratic Lawyers had denounced the trade in very young children for pornographic purposes, no one had been willing to believe it. Yet 800,000 children were currently reported to be victims of those practices in Thailand.

7. Unless something was done, there was a danger, as Bernard Kouchner had said, that the broad masses of poor adults and children would become the victims of a new form of slavery, for the benefit of the medicine of the rich.

8. Ms. PARKER (International Educational Development, Inc.) said that her organization was currently waging a campaign in the United States of America to secure that country's ratification of human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child. More than in any other developed country, children in the United States suffered from governmental disregard, as was evidenced by the worrying statistics on infant mortality, immunization, education, and health care in general. The deficits could lead to urgent situations, as was currently the case with AIDS.

9. The United States had a relatively high percentage of children born to HIV-positive mothers. Studies had shown, however, that between 66 and 87 per cent of those infants would become HIV-negative within 18 months without any therapeutic intervention. Unfortunately, many of those infants were treated with AZT, which, according to many researchers, would undoubtedly kill them on account of its extreme toxicity.

10. Turning to the wars in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, she said that children were the first victims of those conflicts, the effect of which was to lower their resistance to disease and to cause eating disturbances, developmental problems and the like. In addition, more than 100 mentally retarded children had been forcibly removed from their hospital in Vrlika by the Yugoslav National Army, under particularly cruel and humiliating conditions. Several of them had died in transit.

11. The several million Bosnian refugees included 300,000 children and 24,000 newborn babies. By 25 February 1993, 1,755 children had starved or frozen to death in Bandh. There were now more than 4,000 war orphans in Croatia. Throughout the former Yugoslavia, young people returning home after fighting also suffered from post-traumatic shock. Some suffered from depression and committed suicide, others clung to extremist ideologies and glorified war, uniforms and weapons. More serious still, teenagers on all sides of the conflict were forcibly recruited and compelled to fight against their former friends. They were sent to the front line, and were taught to hate. That hatred might poison their whole lives - and it was hard not to feel hatred, whether one was a Croat or a Serb.

12. In conclusion, she said that, while it was easy to identify the aggressors, no one should forget that victims were victims, regardless of which side they were on.

13. Mr. LITTMAN (International Fellowship of Reconciliation) recalled, on the occasion of International Women's Day, that every year between 1 and 2 million women, mostly very young, were subjected to cruel mutilations, euphemistically described by the Commission, in its decision 1992/109, as "harmful traditional practices affecting the health of women".

14. Excision - the practice in question - was performed in some 30 countries in Africa, the Middle East and, to a lesser extent, Asia. Although there was nothing in the Koran to justify the practice, a number of recent fatwas, one of them drawn up by the Grand Sheikh of Al Azhar, seemed to suggest otherwise.

15. The Commission on Human Rights and other competent United Nations bodies should deem excision, which was a flagrant and systematic violation of human rights, an international crime. And women who currently demonstrated against rape in wartime should do so against mutilation in peacetime.

16. He also strongly denounced the issue, by the Islamic Republic of Iran, of a stamp showing a small boy smashing a window on which was depicted the blue Star of David, the symbol of Judaism. The Iranian Government had argued that the stamp was related to the Palestinian intifada; but it was quite plainly a flagrant incitement to religious and racial hatred, which had been condemned, moreover, by the International Philatelic Federation, which sought to promote peace and friendship among peoples.

17. The stamp violated article 10, paragraph 2, of the Convention of the Universal Postal Union. Unfortunately, that organization had no authority to oblige a State to withdraw a stamp from circulation. The stamp also contravened the Convention on the Rights of the Child, article 38 of which stated that persons who had not attained the age of 15 years should not take a direct part in hostilities, whereas the child depicted on the stamp in question appeared to be under 10 years of age. For that reason, the Commission on Human Rights should strongly condemn such a stamp as incitement to international terrorism, yet another recent manifestation of which was the bomb explosion in the World Trade Center building.

18. Mr. HARDER (International Save the Children Alliance) said that the organization he represented worked for the betterment of children in over 90 countries. It therefore welcomed the General Assembly's adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the international community's very favourable response to that instrument.

19. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, mandated to monitor the Convention's application, had begun to examine the reports to be submitted to it by States parties. Positive results were already to be noted in a number of countries: legislation was being amended in the spirit of the Convention, administrative structures were being created to strengthen child protection, information campaigns were being launched to make children aware of their rights and non-governmental organizations working for the rights of the child were receiving increased recognition.

20. Several specialized agencies, including UNICEF, had begun to contribute to the implementation of the Convention's provisions. It was to be hoped that the Centre for Human Rights would provide States parties with the advisory services they needed in that regard. It would also help if the Commission repeated the request to the Secretary-General, made in resolution 1992/75, to ensure the provision of appropriate staff and facilities for the effective performance of the functions of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Commission should also appeal anew to States parties that had made reservations to review the compatibility of their reservations with article 51 of the Convention, according to which a reservation incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention was not permitted, and with the provisions of article 3 of that instrument, relating to the primacy of the best interests of the child.

21. In that connection, it should be noted that, at the fourth meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies, it had been proposed that an analytical study should be made of the problem of incompatibility of reservations formulated with regard to the major international instruments, and that an advisory opinion should be sought from the International Court of Justice in instances of serious incompatibility problems.

22. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, having considered the subject of children in armed conflicts at its October 1992 session, had requested the Secretary-General, in the light of article 45 (c) of the Convention, to undertake a study with a view to improving the protection of children in situations of armed conflict. It had also mentioned the possibility of drafting an optional protocol which would raise to 18 years the minimum age for participation in combat.

23. Lastly, he expressed regret that discussion of the vital question of the child had been relegated to such a late hour.

24. Mrs. EHRET (International Federation Terre des Hommes) said that Colombia was facing a critical situation of political violence and that the civilian population was under cross-fire from the army, paramilitary forces, drug traffickers and guerrilleros. The conditions of the poorest had become even more difficult, and the number of street children had visibly increased.

25. The concept of "internal enemy" had emerged, and the "dirty war" had intensified. It had now been extended to marginalized persons such as street children, prostitutes, beggars and petty thieves; and it was rumoured that some of them were also being killed for the sale of their organs.

26. In 1992, at least 50 persons per month had been killed in the name of "social cleansing". No one dared to protest against such crimes for fear of being killed in turn. A general climate of terror and violence had set in throughout the country. According to available information, members of the police and the military participated in such social cleansing operations with complete impunity. Political opponents were automatically dubbed internal enemies.

27. At Ciudad Bolívar, a large slum on the outskirts of Bogotá, 17 children had been massacred in August 1992. Such mass murders were a frequent occurrence in Medellín. Children who escaped such massacres, and those who had seen their parents killed, thought only of revenge; the vicious circle of violence was thus perpetuated.

28. The International Federation Terre des Hommes called for the creation of a committee to investigate the serious violations of children's fundamental rights in Colombia and the implication of the army and the police in "social cleansing" operations, the bringing to justice of those guilty, the adoption of measures to put an immediate end to the murders of street children, an urgent call to the armed forces to protect the civilian population, particularly children, in all regions of armed conflict, and efforts to resolve conflicts through dialogue in order to lead all parties to lay down their arms and respect the rights of every child.

29. In Nicaragua, half the population was destitute, and the situation of children was calamitous. They were exploited, maltreated or abandoned, and 700,000 of them lived on the streets. Malnutrition was spreading and health conditions worsening. Cholera and leprosy had reappeared. Almost half of the child population could no longer go to school. The illiteracy rate had risen from 12 per cent in 1980 to over 25 per cent currently. In order to survive, many children were driven to begging, theft or prostitution. In such conditions, it was hard for them to think of themselves as fully-fledged persons meriting respect, or to understand that they were not the cause of their own circumstances but, rather, the victims.

30. Nevertheless, in an attempt to break the vicious circle of poverty and exclusion, a few dozen such children had gathered at Managua in June 1992 to express their difficulties and desires in a display of solidarity and trust. They had decided to call on the mayor of Managua and other administrative officials so as to explain to them that they had to work in order to survive, that they had the right to life and that they wished to be called not street children but working children.

31. Terre des Hommes invited the Commission on Human Rights to urge Nicaragua - which, like Colombia, was a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child - to do its utmost to improve the situation of street children without delay.

32. Mr. TEITELBAUM (American Association of Jurists) deplored the serious violations of the rights of the child, including the sale of children, which generally affected poor children from poor countries, and the impossibility of combating such trafficking when no adequate international mechanisms were in place. In his report on the sale of children (E/CN.4/1993/67), Mr. Muntarbhorn rightly emphasized the need to strengthen international cooperation in order to put an end to such an obnoxious practice. He also stressed that physical and psychological security could not be truly ensured unless basic needs were satisfied and the quality of life was promoted (para. 15). In Latin America, however, a substantial proportion of children lived in poverty and were subjected to all kinds of exploitation, sometimes falling victim to traffickers in organs.

33. With regard to the right of a child to preserve his identity, provided for under article 8 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, he drew the Commission's attention to the case of a 15-year-old boy, Juan Pablo Magiotti, who had been adopted in Buenos Aires in 1977 by Mr. Domingo Magiotti and who Mr. Pedro Pablo Tortino and Mr. Juan Alberto Castro were convinced was their grandson, Emiliano Carlos Tortino, son of María Carmen Tortino and Carlos Enrique Castro, who had both disappeared.

34. On 13 November 1990 the Supreme Court had overturned the ruling - which had been confirmed on appeal - of a lower-court judge, who had ordered that, at the request of the government procurator's office and the presumed grandfather of the child, a blood test should be carried out. The Supreme Court had held that the child's legal representative, the adoptive father, had expressed his opposition to such a test, that the true parentage of a minor who had undergone the full adoption process could not be the subject of such an inquiry, that the adoptive child had ceased to belong to his biological family and should be shielded from claims by biological parents who had abandoned him and that to take a blood sample would constitute an assault on the child's physical integrity and would amount to an admission, which should not be obtained by coercion.

35. The American Association of Jurists considered that ruling to run counter to international legislation and to the recommendations of experts on the subject. In that connection Mr. Muntarbhorn had emphasized in his report that children should be entitled to trace their origins and have access to records with information about their biological parents (para. 262). Article 3 (1) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child stated, moreover, that in all actions concerning children, including any undertaken by the courts, the best interests of the child should be a primary consideration, as Judge Fayt, one of the Supreme Court judges, had emphasized in his dissenting opinion. Furthermore, it was cynical to say that parents had abandoned their child when in fact they were victims of enforced disappearance.

36. As for the argument that a blood test constituted an assault on the physical integrity of the person undergoing it, Mr. Peter Tak, Professor of Law at the University of Nijmegen in the Netherlands, had shown, in a study on the use of blood tests in criminal cases in Europe, that it was unfounded, adding, however, that the taking of blood samples should be subject to adequate technical and legal safeguards. His study concentrated on the criminal aspect, of course, but it was clearly a crime for children to be

adopted without their family's consent, and ever if the adoptive parent was not party to the crime he could be considered an accomplice to all intents and purposes if he refused to give permission for the test in question to go ahead.

37. In conclusion he emphasized that the right to and identity had to be respected and that it would be appropriate to set up international mechanisms to safeguard the exercise of that right.

38. Ms. OZDEN-BEORY (Centre Europe-Tiers Monde) congratulated Mr. Muntarbhorn on having given factual details in his report on the plight of thousands of children, particularly in the third world. The Centre Europe-Tiers Monde (CETIM) had been horrified by the traffic in children used as jockeys in camel races in the Gulf countries, by the scandalous promotion in Europe of sexual tourism involving third world children, and by the cases of young Asian prostitutes suffering from AIDS who had simply been murdered. Those responsible - rich foreigners or traffickers with connections in the drug world or with the police - went unpunished. Criticism should also be directed at certain States such as Iran, where numerous children were orphans because their parents had been executed and where special courts had been set up to try in camera children aged between 7 and 15 who were accused of committing offences.

39. In Turkey, the Kurdish population had been subjected to serious repression. Children had not been spared, and she quoted cases of children who had been executed or had suffered as a result of action by the armed forces.

40. Moreover, Turkey had expressed reservations with regard to articles 17, 29 and 30 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which it was party; those articles directly affected Kurdish children. Not only had the Turkish Government not recognized the Kurdish people, as it had promised, but it was carrying out a policy of assimilation.

41. In Haiti, street children had been savagely repressed since the military coup d'état of 29 September 1991. The army acted with complete impunity. In Port-au-Prince, children were thrown into prison, where they were frequently tortured, sometimes to death. Paramilitary groups - the "Zenglendos" - took to the streets at night and had on several occasions attacked and set fire to the Lafanmi Selavi centre - established by Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide long before he had become President - which took in street children.

42. In the Western Sahara conflict, for the previous 18 years thousands of children had known no other life but refugee camps, owing to the Security Council's indecisiveness in implementing the peace plan. Furthermore, it had been found that over 80 children and young adolescents had lived or were still living in Moroccan prisons which were just as much of a reality as Tazmamart.

43. As for Switzerland, the law denying seasonal workers the right to live in Switzerland with their families was contrary to article 10 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Teachers and psychologists who had dealings with

the children of seasonal workers reunited with their families after long periods of separation could attest to the distress caused by the law.

44. CETIM therefore requested the Commission to make every effort to ensure that the rights of the child were respected and that programmes to protect children against sale, prostitution, pornography and forced labour were carried out. It asked States to strengthen their legislation in order to make it possible to prosecute their nationals who were guilty of offences relating to child prostitution in third countries where they were beyond the reach of the law and welcomed the fact that Germany had already taken a step in that direction. Lastly, CETIM called upon the Swiss Government to withdraw its reservation regarding article 10 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and thus be in a position to ratify it.

45. Mrs. FATIO (Baha'i International Community) stated that she was also speaking on behalf of the following organizations: the Anti-Slavery Society for the Protection of Human Rights, Disabled People's International, the International Association of Penal Law, the International Council of Jewish Women, the International Council of Women, International Educational Development, Inc., the International Movement for Fraternal Union among Races and Peoples, Human Rights Advocates, Inc., Planetary Citizens and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Those organizations wished to focus attention on the importance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and of moral education in protecting those rights. A society which did not promote the development of its children's physical, mental and moral capacities destroyed its own foundations, for the destiny of future generations depended on the attention given to children of the current generation.

46. It was often forgotten that one of the most important rights set forth in the Convention was the right to moral education based on the principle of the oneness of humanity. With the current lack of moral education, many children and young people had lost their bearings; the old values had fallen by the wayside, but had not been replaced by new ones, with the result that children were easily lured by the superficial attractions of excessive materialism or else succumbed to old racial, national or religious prejudices.

47. Under article 29 of the Convention children should be educated to respect the rights of others and to appreciate their own cultural identity. Children who learned to accept themselves and others would be able to envisage a world in which diversity need not be a source of conflict. Those who wished to bring about peace and a social order based on justice should possess such essential virtues as truthfulness, compassion, fair-mindedness, humility and kindness. Such fundamental values were not the exclusive province of any particular religion or set of beliefs. They were the moral foundation for all societies. When children saw themselves as members of one human family they would understand that in exercising their own rights they should respect those of other people.

48. In accordance with article 28, children should be taught in an environment that respected and promoted their human dignity. Children who respected their own nobility would easily learn to respect that of others. Children were particularly susceptible to materialism, prejudice and extreme

nationalism. Yet, having been born without prejudices, they were also receptive to learning about and appreciating different peoples and cultures.

49. As was suggested by article 17 of the Convention, the mass media could have a powerful impact on the moral and spiritual development of children. Too often, unfortunately, they merely encouraged violence and cruelty.

50. She applauded the efforts of many schools, non-governmental organizations, Governments and international organizations such as UNESCO and UNICEF in developing curricula and materials fostering respect for human rights. Governments should encourage schools and the media to foster knowledge and understanding of other cultures and to combat racial or ethnic prejudices. In addition, games should be developed which encouraged cooperation over competition.

51. Mr. BORDIU (World Federation of Democratic Youth) said that over 500 million young people were being brutally exploited throughout the world, particularly in southern Asia and in Latin America. The European Commission in Brussels had recently adopted a directive to ensure a minimum of protection to young persons working in the Community. However, from recognition of what it deemed to be a need to retain a flexible approach to employment, the directive did not prohibit children from being employed on newspaper rounds or for fruit and grape picking, or harvesting. In EEC countries, children under 15 years of age did not, in principle, have the right to work, although that prohibition did not apply in the cultural or sports sectors, or to children of not less than 13 years of age employed in light work.

52. Many States, however, did not enforce those laws. In England, 2 million children, many of them immigrants, were employed in garment manufacture, agriculture or mining. In Portugal, hundreds of thousands of children were employed in the textile, footwear and building industries. In Italy, 500,000 children were employed in the leather and motor vehicle sectors. In many countries, the hotel and restaurant sectors employed children for cleaning and serving.

53. France had stringent regulations governing child labour. Even so, clandestine workshops had been found where children were employed. Furthermore, the situation of apprentices in some enterprises was disquieting. A proportion of French employers would like the minimum school-leaving age to be reduced to 14 and to see the legislation governing child labour relaxed. The World Federation of Democratic Youth hoped that the French State would not accede to those requests.

54. In the United States of America, children were subject to arbitrary arrest and imprisonment. Every year thousands of children died for lack of medical care, while the United States courts continued to pass death sentences on young people under 18 years of age. In the southern States, child labour continued to be exploited.

55. He deplored the fact that so few representatives of States had bothered to come to listen to the statements which the non-governmental organizations had to make on the subject of the child and called on States which had not yet done so to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

56. Mr. BATAKALWA (International Federation of Pedestrians) said that in Togo, Rwanda, Angola, South Africa, the occupied territories and Zaire the rights of the child were systematically violated with impunity.

57. With regard to Africa, a Zairian research worker, Mr. Mbula-Miongo, had shown that although African dictators such as Bokassa, Amin Dada and Mobutu had been bloodthirsty and cruel, particularly towards children and young people, that was in part because they themselves had been badly treated as children. Mr. Mbula-Miongo had also noted that repression would not cease until the United Nations placed controls on the sale of arms to dictatorships.

58. In Zaire, President Mobutu had led the country to the brink of civil war and pillaged the nation's resources. According to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the situation on the political, economic, social and human level was disastrous. The main victims were children who wandered round the towns competing with dogs for discarded scraps of meat in restaurant refuse bins.

59. AIDS had been making disturbing strides in Zaire. Between 1986 and 1987, according to the Zairian Human Rights League, Professor Zagury, a French physician, and Professor Lurhuma, a Zairian physician, had tested an anti-AIDS vaccine on military personnel and on children between 2 and 18 years of age, in contravention of the rules laid down by WHO. In all likelihood, the authorization for that criminal experimentation had come from Marshal Mobutu, who, had the vaccine been a success, would have taken a 10 per cent share of the marketing rights. Those facts have never been denied by the President of the Republic of Zaire, nor had they ever been the subject of inquiry in France. Nevertheless, the Zairian Human Rights League had, in its report, provided a partial list of the children who had died between 15 and 18 December 1986 as a result of the experiments.

60. In general, children in Zaire had no access to medical care, which could result in permanent impairment of their mental and physical health. Furthermore, under Marshal Mobutu's rule, every endeavour has been made to systematically destroy family structures and suppress all social values of the community. Debauchery and prostitution were encouraged, the latter extending to young girls and boys confined in brothels.

61. There was also evidence in northern Equateur province of the forced recruitment of children between the ages of 13 and 17 into Marshal Mobutu's praetorian guard, the President's special division. Such children, after training from Israeli instructors at Kota Koli training camp, became veritable killing machines fighting alongside Angolan mercenaries within UNITA or were used by the regime to crush peaceful demonstrations.

62. He called on the Commission to ask the Governments of Israel, Egypt, France and South Africa to stop supplying Marshal Mobutu with heavy weapons,

which were used against the people of Zaire, and military instructors. He also asked the Commission to appoint a special rapporteur to investigate violations of the rights of the child in Zaire.

63. Mrs. TEXIER (France Libertés - Fondation Danielle Mitterrand) said that her organization was seriously concerned about the situation of children throughout the world and in particular in Brazil. A number of members of France Libertés had gone to Brazil in September 1992 to meet members of the Mothers of Acari group, which was campaigning actively to find the whereabouts of 11 of their children, kidnapped in Rio de Janeiro on 26 July 1990 from the district of Magé.

64. In its report (E/CN.4/1993/25), the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances advised the Commission that, according to information received from relatives or from non-governmental organizations, "the intelligence section of the military police had identified the kidnappers as military police officers from the 9th Battalion in Rocha Miranda and detectives from the Cargo Theft Department". The Working Group also indicated that the mothers "were reported to have received death threats from the military police officers responsible for their sons' disappearance" and that "no one had been brought to justice in connection with the crime".

65. That denial of justice had been compounded by the killing on 16 January 1993, in broad daylight in the centre of Rio de Janeiro, of Mrs. Edmeia Da Silva Eusebio, leader of the Mothers of Acari, and her niece, Sheila da Conceicão. Mrs. Da Silva Eusebio had on several occasions complained of death threats, but the police authorities had never given the affair adequate attention.

66. France Libertés urged the Commission to call on the Brazilian authorities to take all necessary steps to protect the six Mothers of Acari who were still alive, namely Mrs. Marilena Lima de Souza, Mrs. Vera Lucia Flores, Mrs. Denise Vascencelos Euzilar, Mrs. Joana Da Silva Olivera, Mrs. Edmeia Santos Cruz and Mrs. Teresa Souza Costa, to make a full inquiry into the killing of Mrs. Da Silva Eusebio and Sheila da Conceicão, to bring the perpetrators to justice and to complete and make public the inquiry into the disappearance of the 11 children at Magé on 26 July 1990.

67. Mr. MENGHISTU (African Association of Education for Development) said that peoples the world over looked to the Commission on Human Rights and to Governments to take concrete action rather than merely making statements and ratifying conventions, especially where the rights of the child were concerned. Children, on whom the future of mankind depended, unfortunately often seemed to be used by political groups and Governments, whose only interest was in power for its own sake.

68. In Ethiopia, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) was systematically engaged in violating human rights in general and the rights of the child in particular. Many children were totally deprived because their parents were illegally detained or had no work. It should be remembered that Ethiopia had no social security, unemployment benefit or compensation for improper dismissal. Cases that could be mentioned were the dismissal of the 500,000 members of the former Ethiopian armed forces, the

unjustified and illegal dismissal of 9,000 employees of the Building Construction Authority and the closing down by EPRDF troops of an agricultural development project office in the Afar region, which had employed 2,550 persons.

69. The EPRDF was bent on fomenting conflict among the various nations and ethnic groups that had lived in Ethiopia in harmony for generations. The international community had a moral responsibility to prevent Ethiopia from suffering the kind of tragedy seen in Bosnia and Somalia.

70. The EPRDF was more interested in teaching children how to handle weapons than to read and write; 54 per cent of EPRDF army members were under 16 years of age. The EPRDF was not only violating the rights of Ethiopian children, it was also destroying their future and that of the country.

71. The massive violations of human rights of which the EPRDF was guilty had been condemned by the European Parliament in a resolution dated 9 July 1992, by the ACP-EEC Joint Assembly in its final resolution of 1 October 1992 and by the Congressional Human Rights Caucus of the United States House of Representatives on 8 October 1992.

72. On 4 January 1993, EPRDF security forces had massacred innocent, unarmed students staging a peaceful demonstration. Those cold-blooded murders had been condemned by many organizations including Amnesty International, the Addis Ababa University Teachers' Association, the Ethiopian Human Rights Council and the Ethiopian Medehin Democratic Party and other major political and non-political mass movements.

73. He called upon the Commission on Human Rights to take measures to eliminate the dangers to which African children in general, and those in Ethiopia in particular, were exposed and to ensure that their rights to life, peace and development were respected.

The meeting rose at 12.10 a.m.